REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

REVISION TO FLEX POLICY

Report Reference	P-26-01
Meeting Date	1st June 2026
Agenda Item	7
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This report follows the report tabled to the March committee meeting.

In the November 2025 progress review for the Corporate Peer Challenge, the peer group recommended the council review how time accrued by staff in facilitating events is managed.

Currently, staff working events will accrue flex for the time worked at events; in line with the council's flexible working policy, staff must maintain a balance below 2 days at the end of each calendar month with any excess flex written of. There is an allowance for exigencies and when such flex is accrued close to the end of the month (e.g. at the Christmas Market) additional flexibility is provided for taking the flex during the following month.

The current system broadly works well from a TOIL management perspective, insofar as there is no routine writing off of flex with most staff ensuring flex is taken. There have been occasions where this has involved taking flex in place of annual leave to avoid flex being written off.

The challenge it can present is that staff working events are required to take TOIL which reduces their working time on their ordinary duties. A number of staff have highlighted this as challenging, expressing a keenness not to lose their flex but also having duties to undertake which taking flex would frustrate.

Since the changes introduced in 2024, which split the single full time Events Manager role in two, the staffing requirements for events has been simplified. It is principally larger events that require support from the wider team (e.g. Christmas market and music festival), although there is additional time from marketing staff attending some events to gather content from the split of events/marketing. There are other occasions where staff are involved in event deployment e.g. members of the marketing team facilitating the Discover Knutsford stands at council and external events.

1.2 DISCUSSION AT MARCH MEETING

At the March meeting, the committee considered a number of options for alternative systems for accounting for flex accrued in the delivery of events, it was expressed that there was a preference for using officers over temporary staff, and a preference that that the existing flex limits should not be increased.

1.3 ENGAGEMENT WITH STAFF

The options presented to the committee were discussed with officers at a team meeting. The team highlighted the value of council staff working events noting it:

- provides opportunity for the public to engage directly with the council, having staff with strong council knowledge provides opportunity to best represent the council
- plays a role in supporting a strong team
- ensures those working have a stronger stake in the success of the event

It was recognised that there could be some aspects where temporary staff could complement delivery, at particular events.

The consensus amongst officers was for a system that enabled a longer period for flex accrued delivering events to be taken back.

2.0 PROPOSED POLICY REVISION

2.1 OVERVIEW

Following the feedback of both the committee and officers, it is suggested that a second class of flex is created for time accrued delivering events. The proposed policy amendment (see 2.2) enables the flex to either be accrued as ordinary flex (which is subject to a monthly reset for excess flex) or as event flex which would be required to be taken within three months. How it is accrued would be agreed by managers. This would only apply to staff where working the event is not a core part of their responsibility; where the event would be considered a core part of their responsibility, ordinary flex would be accrued (e.g. events staff working the Christmas Market, the Town Clerk working the Town Meeting and Town Awards etc).

This system addresses the pressure challenge of taking the time back within a shorter period to prevent flex loss whilst still enabling this where it is practical for the employee and council. In practice, the three-month period after events usually coincides with the summer period and Christmas period. The revision maintains the standard flex limit to encourage ordinary flex to be taken.

Additionally, there may be occasions where it would be expedient to use temporary staff to support event delivery to complement existing staff and volunteers. This does not require policy amendment and would form part of the event's budget as applicable.

2.2 REVISION TO STAFF HANDBOOK REF FLEX POLICY

The following amendment is proposed:

> You may carry a credit or debit of 2 working days over as 'ordinary' flex ~~over~~ from one calendar month to another. Any credit hours in excess will be lost and any debit hours will be deducted from the employee's salary. In exceptional circumstances only a Line Manager may permit the carryover of additional hours.
>
> Where:
>
> a) you work additional hours to staff a council event AND
> b) staffing the event is not a core responsibility of your role

your manager may agree you can accrue this time as either ‘ordinary’ or ‘events’ flex. Events flex is accounted for separately and does not result in the loss of excess hours at the end of the calendar month but must be taken within the next three months. Any events flex not taken within this period shall be lost.

3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

The committee should consider approval of the amended policy.